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## RURAL DEVELOPMENT CELEBRATES HOMEOWNERSHIP MONTH

*USDA housing programs help expand and preserve the American dream*

**MAPLETON**, June 17, 2010 – In celebration of National Homeownership Month, USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider joined by Mayor of Mapleton Mark Anderson, Eid-Co President Jason Eid and community members gather today in Mapleton to highlight Rural Development's success in providing homeownership opportunities.

"By helping people acquire homes, we help build better lives and communities," said Schneider. "We are pleased to play a vital role in the Obama administration's commitment to ensure that rural communities are vibrant and thriving."

This year's homeownership month theme is "Protecting the American Dream," which is the intent of Rural Development's housing programs. By using sound underwriting criteria, Rural Development ensures that borrowers are able to repay their loans, thus helping keep people in their homes.



*USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider joins with community leaders and the Joseph Bailes and Alisha Balzum family in celebrating Homeownership 2010.*



*USDA Rural Development State Director Jasper Schneider presents Alisha Balzum a Certificate of Appreciation and an American Linden tree for her family's participation in Homeownership 2010.*

Joseph Bailes and Alisha Balzum heard about Rural

Development's home loan programs through a friend who also lives in Mapleton and has a loan with the agency. Using the Single Family Housing Direct Loan Program, Joseph and Alisha were able to get funding directly from Rural Development. This type of loan provides low, fixed interest rates and does not require a down payment.

"Obtaining our loan through Rural Development was a great process and we wouldn't have a home without it," said Alisha Balzum. Joseph and Alisha's family live on Maple Pointe Boulevard. It is a new subdivision on the northwest side of Mapleton. Rural Development has

financed many of the homes in this subdivision, along with many other areas of the town. Around the state, Rural Development has played an important role in the continuous growth of North Dakota by improving quality of life through homeownership opportunities.

National Homeownership Month is observed each June to raise awareness about the vital role homeownership plays in improving lives, creating jobs and economic opportunities, and strengthening America's neighborhoods.

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The new homeowners chose Eid-Co to build their home as they had heard great things about the company. Eid-Co has constructed over 4,500 homes in Fargo-Moorhead and surrounding areas.

Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA Rural Development's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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